

Youth Ministry Program: A One Year Sample

This document is a SAMPLE parish youth ministry program that seeks to be faithful to the guidance of the USCCB guidelines for high school catechesis as instructed in the *Adaptation of Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age for Use in Parish and Youth Ministry Programs* (Curriculum Framework for short). This Program offers sample sessions that could be implemented in a parish youth ministry while satisfying parts of each of the six core themes. This is a one-year sample. Presuming the parish wants to keep its youth involved for the four years of high school, three more years of curricula could be developed using this model.

This is a resource-based model that takes existing resources and aligns them with the six core themes. In this one year sample, content of each core theme was covered in at least two youth ministry sessions. The core theme and content covered is listed for each session. Each session is drawn from a very credible youth ministry publisher that the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry recommends. The parish youth minister implementing the program would need access to these resources. The parish should be willing to invest in catechetical resources for youth. No resources mentioned here are expensive and none require supplying textbooks. Of course, the youth minister is free to substitute other resources and is encouraged to research other resources and design future programs. We invite anyone who adds to the model to share with us so we can post on our OYYAM Wiki for youth ministry resources. The resource bank is created to align with the Curriculum Framework. There are other program suggestions on the resource bank. We have also included a third monthly meeting with alternative activities that would cover other themes and allow for more social options.

Each of the twelve sessions are designed in a typical youth ministry format: **Welcome** (Hospitality, up-beat atmosphere); **Warm up** (Icebreakers, warmers); **Work** (Content and teaching; prayer); **Wrap up** (social and fun). Almost every resource mentioned here comes complete with all needed content, some icebreakers, and prayer. We encourage that the youth minister read the program in advance and adapt it to fit the parish needs. Feel free to change, delete sections, add sections, put in your own style and stories, or make it shorter or longer. Make it fit your needs. These twelve sessions run anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours. You will need to adapt it to fit your schedule and needs. Feel free to call the OYYAM at (615) 241-2565 if you need help adapting resources.

Here are some basic assumptions about the programs listed here:

- The content is for high school level, grades 9-12.
- All four grades are meeting together (even though you can break it out by age grade level if you want.)
- The sessions are conducted in a basically informal environment; not using a typical classroom format. Learning is experiential and strong on dialog and interaction.
- The program is part of a comprehensive youth ministry approach.
- Young people are invited to assist adults in planning and directing the programs.

Keep in mind that the model offered here is purely a **SAMPLE** of one way you can offer the Curriculum Framework that the USCCB has put forth for adequately catechizing teens. If you have a different model and it works well for you, then we encourage you to keep using it as long as your pastor is satisfied that it is covering the key concepts that young people need to learn, which should line up to the concepts in the Curriculum Framework. We hope “newer” youth ministers in particular will find this model helpful.

Year-long Program

August

Parent Session (*This session could also take place in late spring with parents of Confirmation kids*)

Take this time to meet and greet with parents of teens, and allow them to socialize with one another. Offer the Parent Survey (sample survey can be found in your resource manual) and discuss with parents what they hope their teens will get out of youth ministry. Also take a little time to discuss with them the importance of their involvement in the faith development of their child and ways they can reinforce the ministry in the home. Walk parents through the youth ministry schedule for the year. Close with a parent/family prayer service.

September

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Many parish youth ministry programs choose to do a “Kick off” gathering that features food, fun, music, prayer, and a lot of promotion for the coming year.

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Understanding the four Gospels; their similarities and differences.

Resources: from *Faith Works for Senior High*, Saint Mary’s Press (www.smp.org) Pages 51-57
“Good News: Hearing and Proclaiming the Gospels”

Notes: This program needs an opening icebreaker but everything else is included.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 1—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture”; covers several key points on Jesus and revelation through scripture.

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Connecting my story to the Catholic story—Church and scripture

Resources: from *Catholic to the Core*; 2006 *Youth Ministry Resource Manual*, NFCYM (www.nfcym.org) Pages 93-97 “Sharing the Faith; the Catholic Story; Our Story”

Notes: This program needs an opening icebreaker but everything else is included.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 4—“Jesus Christ’s Mission Continues in the Church”; covers several key points on the Church – belonging, sign and instrument of communion with God, etc...

October

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Understanding the various images of God and the Trinity in Scripture

Resources: from *Total Catechesis: The Creed*, Saint Mary’s Press, Pages 54-66 “God Our Father”

and *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, Saint Mary’s Press (used primarily as a back-up resource book for the youth minister).

Notes: This in its entirety is a 2-hour long session. We recommend choosing certain activities from the lesson plan to develop. It needs an opening icebreaker.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 2—“Who is Jesus Christ?” This session looks at God the Father and the relationship of the Father and the Son; it looks at the Trinity.

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Alternative activities

Theme: Global Solidarity and Fair Trade

Resources: <http://education.crs.org/> see “Solidarity”, “Fair Trade” or “Catholics Confront Global Poverty” under the Activities tab in the website menu for great prayers, activities, talks, videos, and other resources.

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Describes the various traits needed to be a modern-day disciple of Jesus Christ.

Resources: from *Youth Ministry Strategies; Creative Activities to Complement the Horizons Curriculum*, Saint Mary’s Press, Pages/Section C:1 “DIAs: Disciples in Action” and...

20 *More Teen Prayer Services*, 23rd Publication (available on Amazon.com) Pages 45-50 “People to Imitate”

Note: We highly encourage you to share (via email or other mode) the topics, content, and prayers of youth ministry gatherings with parents. Also, if you have resources, prayers, or activities for adults, parents, families, or young children around the same topic, equip parents with these resources to use in the home.

Notes: This is a short discussion session on identifying disciples and traits of disciples with a prayer service from 23rd Publication that connects to the lesson plan. This session needs an icebreaker to begin.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 3—“The Mission of Jesus Christ”; covers the call to holiness and living as a disciple of Jesus.

November

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Understand the meaning of grace in sacrament and in the everyday moment.

Resources: from *Catholic to the Core: 2006 Youth Ministry Resource Manual*, NFCYM, Pages 23-27, “Every Moment is Grace”

Notes: This is a two hour session; some parts could be shortened.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 6—“Life in Jesus Christ”; covers grace and the call to holiness.

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Alternative activity

Consider doing a winter clothing drive or collecting shampoo, toothpaste, and other items local shelter may need.

Theme: Poverty and Homelessness

Resources: from *Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Affirming Life*, NFCYM, Pages 73-85, “Understanding Poverty” or from *Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Our Catholic Faith Sunday and Beyond*, NFCYM, Pages 103-106, “Why Do It? Understanding the Call to Serve as More than Service Hours”

Or

Theme: Human Trafficking

Resources: www.centralohiorescueandrestore.org
www.gracehaven.org and
www.salvationarmyusa.org

Look under “Programs that help” and “Combating Human Trafficking”

Note: This is a good time of year to begin thinking about and planning summer activities like mission camps, service projects, parish summer camps, or trips to sporting events. For ideas and resources around these and other summer youth activities contact our office.

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Advent; waiting and expectation; the need to be ready with emphasis on correctly understanding the Book of Revelation and Christian expectation

Resources: from *Ministry Ideas for Celebrating Advent and Christmas with Teens, Families, and Parishes*, Saint Mary's Press, Pages 13-22 “First Sunday of Advent: Great Expectations: A Session on the Theme of Waiting”

Notes: This is a good session for the entire youth group to prepare for Advent. Be sure to read the preparatory notes, especially on the section on Revelation. The SMP Youth Bible is an excellent resource with side notes for reading the Scriptures, especially The Book of

Revelation. There are other sessions for the rest of Advent that could be offered for a small group elective Bible Study program during December.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 2—covers the mystery of the Incarnation.

December

Youth Gathering for December

Alternate Activity

Consider making arrangements with a local nursing home to take teens caroling or contacting a local children's hospital about letting teens make hundreds of handmade Christmas cards for children being hospitalized during the Christmas season. You can plan either of these options for a Saturday afternoon/evening and then host a Christmas party lock-in over night at the parish. And/or consider getting youth involved in or even helping to coordinate a parish giving tree.

January

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Epiphany; revelation of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit

Resources: from *Ministry Ideas for Celebrating Advent and Christmas with Teens, Families, and Parishes*, Saint Mary's Press, Pages 75-80 Epiphany: Revelation, Radiance, Remembrance: A session to Explore the Biblical Story of the Magi

Notes: Needs an icebreaker to begin.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 1—covers Divine Revelation and Sacred Scripture.

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Alternate activity

Consider doing a diaper and bottle drive for a local pregnancy center

Theme: Right to Life

Resources: from *Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Affirming Life*, NFCYM, Pages 13-20, "Responding to the Sorrow of Abortion" and Pages 21-34, "Our Sin and God's Mercy: Catholic Teaching on the Death Penalty" and Pages 35-54, "Euthanasia: Am I My Brother's Keeper?"

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: A dialog with youth on Catholic belief and practice

Note: We encourage all parish youth ministry programs to consider hosting a parish retreat for teens. The length of the retreat can vary and you can consider hosting a one-day or half-day retreat for parents preceding the teen retreat to equip them with topics for taking it home.

Resources: *Youth Ministry Strategies: Creative Activities to Complement the Horizons Curriculum*, Saint Mary's Press, Pages/Section D:21 and 20 *More Teen Prayer Services*, 23rd Publications, Pages 41-43 "The Cross of Courage: Doing What is Right"

Notes: Needs an opening icebreaker

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 4—Belonging to and living as a member of the Church

February

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Reconciliation as a celebration of grace; forgiveness

Resources: from *Living and Loving our Catholic Faith: Sacraments: Celebrations of Grace*, NFCYM, Pages 55-59 "The Sacred Do Over"

Notes: This event if done with the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation would take about 2 ½ hours. If celebration of the sacrament is not possible, you can do the content and activities and close with a different prayer. You could then invite teens to celebrate the sacrament at a different time.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 5—Penance and Reconciliation

Parent Session (*This session could also precede or follow a required meeting for Confirmation parents, to attempt to get all parents of teens together to socialize and support one another*)

Theme: Strong Catholic Families Equal Strong Catholic Youth

Resources: *Strong Catholic Families*, *Strong Catholic Youth Handbook* from the NFCYM

Notes: Consider using the "Family Faith Assessment" from the Handbook to discuss how parents can pass on the faith in the home. Provide them with time for small group discussions and a resource page for parent resources (contact our office for a list of parent resources)

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Alternate activity

Consider doing a food drive or serving at a local soup kitchen.

Theme: Feeding the Hungry

Host a "Souper Bowl Party" or a "Food Fast"

Resources: <http://www.souperbowl.org/> or <http://www.foodfast.org/>

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: A discussion and activity on Eucharist and real presence

Resources: *Catholic to the Core: 2006 Youth Ministry Resource Manual*, NFCYM Pages 29-34 "Presence that Makes a Difference: Eucharist and Discipleship"

Notes: If Lent begins in February you might want to switch this program to later in Lent and use a Lenten preparation program instead (next activity).

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 5—Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist

March

1st Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: Lent; Ash Wednesday; prayer, fasting, and almsgiving

Resources: from *Youth Ministry Access*, Center for Ministry Development (www.cmd.org)

Program title- Participating in the Lenten Practices: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

Notes: *Youth Ministry Access* from the CMD requires a year-long subscription. It is an excellent resource that supplies new programs every year. Each program is a complete youth session. If you are not subscribed to *Youth Ministry Access* you might want to consider. The following session is an alternative session in case you do not have this resource in your computer.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 6—Living as Jesus' disciple. Also check out the *Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving resources at CRS.org for supplemental resources*

Alternate Program for 1st Gathering of the Month

Theme: Virtue of charity; Catholic Social Teaching

Resources: from *Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Affirming Life*, NFCYM, Pages 1-7

“Foundational Session: Charity: Love Received and Given”

Notes: this is a two hour session, it could be adapted to fit a shorter time frame.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core them 6—Human rights and duties

2nd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Alternate Activity

Bring teens to Diocesan Youth Rally in March

Also, consider having teens do the H2O Project for Lent from Living Water International.

Information and free resources are available on their website: <http://www.water.cc/>

3rd Youth Ministry Gathering of the Month

Theme: The Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ experienced in human life

Resources: from *Faith Works for Senior High*, Saint Mary's Press, Pages 129-140 “No Pain, No Gain: Experiencing the Paschal Mystery”

Notes: Needs an icebreaker. There is a lot of material in this program. It could be broken into two evenings or you could pull out the parts you want to emphasize.

Curriculum Framework connection: Core theme 3—Redemption through the passion and death of Jesus

April

Good Friday- Join the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry & the Office for Social Concerns downtown for the annual Walking Stations of the Cross

Alternate Activity for April

Theme: Care for Creation

Resources: <http://education.crs.org/> click “Care for Creation” under the activities tab and locally check out <http://www.shepherdscorner.org/>

Alternative Activity for April

Theme: Dating/Chastity/Relationships with the opposite sex

With prom approaching and with May being Teen Pregnancy Awareness Month this is a good time of year to talk about dating, relationships, making moral decisions and embracing chastity.

Resource: from *Discover Jesus Christ the Way: 2007 Youth Ministry Resource Manual*, www.nfcym.org “What is so great about having a date?” pp. 79-86

July

Bring Teens to Diocesan Gospel Road in July

NOTES:

Other Resources

The preceding programs involve about a dozen or so available resources that we have researched, tested, and/or used in youth ministry. There are many other resources available so we encourage you to explore them as well. FREE is always good and there are a number of free resources on the web. We continually go to the web for free icebreakers and group warmers. One free resource that we want to highlight is the Resource Center at the Saint Mary’ Press web page. This page has a lot of articles and free programs to consider. Try it. Here is the web link: <http://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/>

Reaching teens who don’t come to youth ministry gatherings

Let’s face it; you won’t attract all the teens in the parish to attend youth ministry gatherings like the sessions we just outlined in this section of the Parish Resource Manual. Many of them are too busy or just not interested. So do you write them off? Of course not! There are many ways to address teens that don’t come to events or gatherings. Technology can be very helpful.

If you have an e-mail list or a social media page of some sort (Facebook) then take some time to write a summary of the lesson you covered in your youth gathering and then send it to the whole e-mail list or put it out there through social media. You can include prayer pieces and discussion questions or stories to share with those who didn’t attend your session. Keep it short and to the point.

Resources used in this section

Here is a list of resources we recommend for the sessions we outlined for year's worth of programming. We tried to keep this cost effective realizing that the parish youth ministry budget is usually very modest. All of the resources combined for this one year of programming totals less than \$300. (This estimated cost is excluding the *Youth Ministry Access Series* from the Center for Ministry Development which is an on line subscription service that itself would provide a full year of programs.) Of course we are highlighting single programs in each resource book and given that the books have many other themed programs, you could construct about 3 or 4 years of programs from these suggested resources. Occasionally resources go out of print so give us a call if you encounter that situation in your search and we can help since we have everything listed here in the OYYAM library.

Center for Ministry Development; www.cmd.org

Youth Ministry Access

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry; www.nfcym.org

2006 Youth Ministry Resource Manual: Catholic to the Core

2007 Youth Ministry Resource Manual: Discover Jesus the Way

Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith; Our Catholic Faith Sunday and Beyond

Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Celebrations of Grace

Living and Loving Our Catholic Faith: Affirming Life

23rd Publications; www.Amazon.com

20 More Teens Prayer Services

Saint Mary's Press; www.smp.org

Total Catechesis; The Creed

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth

The Catholic Youth Bible

Youth Ministry Strategies; Creative Activities to Complement the Horizons Program

Ministry Ideas for Celebrating Advent and Christmas with Teens, Families, and Parishes